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CU-STAFF Chicago 4513

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SECRET

CLASSIFICATION - DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

250

COUNTRY CUBA

REPORT NO. TDCS-3/169,582

SUBJECT GOVERNMENT ACTION AGAINST OPPOSITION FORCES IN THE ESCAMBRAY MOUNTAINS

DATE DISTR. 27 MARCH 1961

PRECEDENCE ROUTINE

DATE OF INFO. JANUARY-1 MARCH 1961

REFERENCES IN 25200

PLACE & DATE ACQ. CUBA (24 MARCH 1961)

APPRAISAL 2

FIELD REPORT NO.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE LEADER OF AN OPPOSITION GROUP IN ESCAMBRAY MOUNTAINS (F).

1. OF THE FOUR OR FIVE OPPOSITION GROUPS THAT HAD BEEN FIGHTING IN THE ESCAMBRAY REGION OF LAS VILLAS PROVINCE, ONLY THE ONE COMMANDED BY EVELIO DUQUE IS BELIEVED TO BE THERE STILL. DUQUE'S MAIN FORCE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN DIVIDED INTO SMALL BANDS, WHICH ARE WITHOUT COMMUNICATION WITH ONE ANOTHER AND ARE OPERATING INDEPENDENTLY.

2. IN LATE JANUARY THE CASTRO GOVERNMENT CONCENTRATED MILITIAMEN IN THE ESCAMBRAY, MAINLY NEAR MANICARAGUA, AND BEGAN LARGE-SCALE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS. ARMED WITH CZECH SUBMACHINE GUNS AND R-2 (SIG) RIFLES, BELGIAN FAL RIFLES, MORTARS, BAZOOKAS AND ARTILLERY PIECES, THE MILITIA UNITS ENCIRCLED ISOLATED GROUPS OF OPPOSITION FORCES. THE CUBAN ARMY USED HELICOPTERS TO PINPOINT CONCENTRATIONS OF OPPOSITION UNITS, THEN LAUNCHED ARTILLERY BARRAGES, WHICH WERE

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FOLLOWED BY AN ASSAULT BY SPECIALLY-TRAINED MILITIA RIFLEMEN.

3. ALTHOUGH NEITHER WELL TRAINED NOR GREATLY DISPOSED TO FIGHT, THE MILITIAMEN WERE USUALLY EFFECTIVE BECAUSE THEY GREATLY OUTNUMBERED THE OPPOSITION. THE MAJORITY OF THE MILITIA UNITS WERE UNDER THE COMMAND OF COMMUNIST OFFICERS OF THE REBEL ARMY. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT FACED THE CONSTANT THREAT OF DEFECTION BY THE MILITIA, MAINLY AS A RESULT OF THE DISCONTENT OVER THE LACK OF FOOD, THIS WAS MINIMIZED BY THE IMMEDIATE ARREST OR TRANSFER OF MALCONTENTS.

4. THE OPPOSITION FORCES HAVE SUFFERED SETBACKS BECAUSE OF A LACK OF SUPPLIES RATHER THAN BECAUSE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ATTACK BY THE GOVERNMENT FORCES. LACKING BOTH ARMS AND FOOD THE OPPOSITION FORCES WERE CONSTANTLY ON THE DEFENSIVE AND WERE FORCED TO MOVE FROM PLACE TO PLACE AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE. ATTEMPTS TO SUPPLY THE OPPOSITION FORCES BY AIR WERE INEFFECTIVE, AND EVEN THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT FROM RESIDENTS OF THE ESCAMBRAY AREA WAS NOT ENOUGH. IN ADDITION TO THE LACK OF FOOD AND ARMS THE OPPOSITION FORCES WERE HANDICAPPED BY A LACK OF COMMUNICATIONS AMONG THE DIFFERENT GROUPS.

5. FIELD DISSEM: CINCLANT.

END OF MESSAGE

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